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DEPARTMENTALIZATION VS GRADED CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (GRADES 1-7), ABSTRACTS OF RESEARCH PERTAINING TO.

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FOURTEEN RESEARCH REPORTS, PUBLISHED BETWEEN 1948 AND 1965, PERTAINING TO DEPARTMENTALIZATION VERSUS GRADED CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ARE BRIEFLY SUMMARIZED. (HM)

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DEPARTMENTALIZATION VS GRADED CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (GRADES 1-7)

January 5, 1966

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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I. DEPARTMENTALIZATION VS GRADED CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. (GRADES 1 - 7)

Citation:

Coffin, Gregory C., "The Effect of Departmental Teaching on Academic Achievement of Children in Grades Four, Five, and Six," University of Connectucut, 1963. Dissertation Abstracts 24; No. 11; 4488-9, May, 1964.

Purpose:

To determine the effect of departmentalization on academic achievement in grades 4, 5, and 6.

Sources of evidence cited by the author:

"t" tests for critical ratio of differences between two sets of tests, given in fall and spring.

Summary of evidence cited by author:

1. No significant differences in academic achievement indicated by either departmental or self-contained classes.
2. Pupils, parents, and teachers participating in study enjoyed it and would like to continue in it.

Generalizations proposed by the author:

Recommendations:
1. That further study over longer period of time be made.
2. That a study be made to determine if there are other areas (not academic) of significant differences.

* * *

Citation:

Zimmerman, William A., "Departmental and Unified Seventh Grade Programs in English and Social Studies: A Study of Change in Subject Matter Achievement and Personal Adjustment," Syracuse University, 1962 Dissertations Abstracts, 23, No.2, p. 517.

Purpose:

To compare English and social studies achievement and personal adjustment of pupils in departmental and unified seventh grade classes.

Procedure:

a. research design: Experimental
b. subjects: 159 7th grade students in two schools in New York state.

c. instruments and types of scores: Achievement tests, personality tests, and personal problem inventory.
d. statistical analysis used: Covariance, a correlated test, and signed rank test.

Results:

1. Tests indicated no significant differences between departmental and unified program students in:
   A. English scores
   B. Citizenship scores
   C. Personality scores

2. No significant change in personal problems indicated for either group from 6th to 7th grade.
3. A significant difference (.05) was found on mean scores of English, citizenship, and personality for both groups on tests before and after participation.

Generalizations by author:

1. 7th grade students in unified program achieved as well in English and citizenship and are as well adjusted as those in the departmental program.
2. Students at 7th grade in both programs scored significantly higher on English, citizenship, and personality adjustment than at completion of their 6th grade.
3. Variability of test scores in English and citizenship did not increase for departmental group, but increased significantly for the unified program.

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Citation:

Otto, Henry J. "Survey Data on Departmentalized Teaching in Elementary Schools," Journal of Educational Research, 42: 105-12, October, 1948.

Purpose:

To determine current practice of departmentalized teaching in elementary schools.

Procedure:

a. research design: Survey
b. subjects: 532 elementary schools (including 46 campus remonstration schools) in 46 states and the District of Columbia.
c. instruments and types of scores: Questionnaire
d. statistical analysis used: Critical ratio

Results:

1. Departmental instruction was reported in 66% of the 532 schools.
2. The range of beginning departmentalization was from kindergarten to 8th grade.
3. Size of school, beyond 3 teachers, was not related to departmentalization.
4. Campus schools had slightly more departmentalization.
5. Of 38 subjects departmentalized, the most frequent (in order) was music, art, P.E., arithmetic, science, social studies, and handwriting.
6. The prevailing practice was to restrict departmentalization, by grades to number of subjects: primary - 3, 4th grade - 4 or less, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th - 5.
7. Some schools departmentalized as many as 7 subjects in the 1st and 2nd grade and up to eleven subjects in the 7th and 8th grades.

Generalizations by author:

He implies "that in schools which departmentalization is restricted to three or fewer subjects, the restriction applies in all the grades."

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Citation:

Addington, Karen, "Effect of Departmentalization in Elementary School on Pupil Achievement." Florida Journal of Educational Research, 4:51-52, January, 1962.

Purpose and/or objective:

To describe achievement of elementary pupils during a year in self-contained classroom and the following year in departmentalized classes.

Procedure:

a. research design: Pretest - Posttest
b. subjects: All 6th grade students in 1960 in three Brevard County, Florida, schools.
c. instruments and types of scores: Stanford Achievement Tests, Intermediate Battery, Forms K and J
d. statistical analysis used: Chi square

Results:

			1960 Grade Placement above	1960 Grade Placement below
1.	1959 Grade Placement	above	40	16
		below	14	30

2. Chi square of 16.3 obtained from data
3. Significant at .05 level of confidence, hence data not independent.

Generalizations by author:

1. Greater discrepancies expect the second year, hence departmentalization cannot be said to alter expectations of achievement.
2. Results are highly tentative and further research is suggested regarding organization patterns.

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Citation:

Hillson, Maurie and Karlson, Ramona, "Change and Movation in Elementary School Organization." New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965, 387 pp.

Purpose:

To bring together in one volume selected readings on elementary school organization.

Summary of author's comments:

Advantages claimed for departmentalization:

1. Recognizes fact that few teachers are competent in more than one or two areas.
2. The greater the teachers understanding of a subject, the greater the possibility of excellent instruction.
3. One teacher is limited in knowledge and time for preparation and variety of techniques of instruction, and all pupils don't respond equally well to all methods, with more than one teacher.
4. Free time for teacher is easier to arrange.
5. No subject is slighted for lack of interest or knowledge of a teacher.
6. Teacher who knows subject well can better evaluate pupils development in this frame of reference.
7. Adjustment of pupil is as good or maybe better under semi-departmental plan.
8. More chance of getting men to teach in a departmentalized school.
9. Better use of facilities.
10. Subject promotion rather than by grades
11. Easier for teacher to keep up with developments in methods, materials, equipment, and literature.

Disadvantages claimed for departmentalization:

1. Makes curriculum subject-centered and not child-centered.
2. Rigid schedule must be maintained.
3. Lacks coordination.
4. More difficulty with unit teaching.
5. Less time with pupil hence teacher less acquainted with pupil.
6. Many changes of class groups might present problems of adjustment, especially with slower ones.
7. Evaluation, record keeping and reporting is more difficult.
8. Superior supervision is needed to coordinate program.
9. Is in opposition to concept of integration as "real" learning and emphasizes instead subject-matter acquisition as "real" learning.

Citation:

Coffin, Gregory C., "Are your Elementary Grades Properly Organized?" School Management, 5:61-24, December, 1961.

Purpose:

Report on one years departmentalization of 4th, 5th, and 6th grades at Reading, Pa.

Summary of author's comments:

1. All 4th and 5th and 6th grade students in four schools in Reading, Pa. were given batteries of achievement and aptitude tests in fall of 1960 and then in the following June.
2. Compared with control group, the departmentalized students achieved up to "one year and one month" more, in all subjects except arithmetic.
3. There was little difference in achievement between groups in the 4th grade.
4. "Coordination is key" to making departmentalization work.
5. Teachers met weekly to "iron out" problems.
6. Homework was coordinated.
7. "...even if test gain [had been] zero, we probably would have continued...Every single one of our teachers was so enthusiastic..."
8. "today's students need specialized instruction in intermediate grades. Self-contained classes aren't good enough."

* * *

Citation:

Barnes, Ronald, E., "A Survey of Status and Trends in Departmentalization in City Elementary Schools," The Journal of Education Research, 55:291-2, March, 1962.

Purpose and/or objective:

To determine if emphasis on subject matter was reinforcing trend in departmentalization in city elementary schools.

Procedure:

a. research design: Questionnaire
b. subjects: 806 elementary schools randomly sampled from 49 states.

Results:

1. 44% of the 806 schools (351) reported some departmentalization.
2. 68% thought departmentalization was neather increasing nor decreasing.
3. 12% thought departmentalization was decreasing
4. 11% thought departmentalization was increasing.

5. 54% of subjects now departmentalized has been so since 1952.
6. Most frequently departmentalized subject, in order, were: music, P.E., art, arithmetic, science, reading, social studies, library, English, and language arts.
7. Reading, arithmetic, and science accounted for most of the recently departmentalized subjects.
8. Of the 351 departmentalized schools:
   64% departmentalized 3 subjects.
   28% departmentalized 4-6 subjects.
    8% departmentalized 7 or more subjects.

Generalizations by author:

1. A trend toward departmentalization in smaller schools, especially in last two years, is indicated.
2. It is probable that smaller city schools are more responsive to criticism and pressure.

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Citation:

"Trends in City-school Organizations -- departmentalization in Elementary Grades,: Research Bulletin of the National Education Assn. 27:4-39, February, 1949.

Purpose and/or objective:

Survey - To ascertain current status of city school organizations in the United States.

Procedure:

a. research design: Survey
b. subjects: 1600 city school systems throughout the U. S.
c. instruments and types of scores: Questionnaire (mailed in November, 1947)
D. statistical analysis used: Percent

Results:

1. The precent of cities reporting some departmentalization, by population groups, are:

Population	Percent
Over 100,000	59
30,000 - 99,999	57
10,000 - 29,999	47
5,000 - 9,999	53
2,500 - 4,999	51

2. Of those cities reporting departmentalization, 12% reported departmentalization "on the way in" while 35% reported it "on the way out," and 51% reported no particular change in popularity.

Generalizations by author:

1. Departmentalization, especially in the upper grades, were introduced mainly to capitalize on teaching specialties.
2. The "road to progress" is through careful consideration of educational needs.
3. Any needed organizational change should be adopted in spirit, and not just in forms.

* * *

Citation:

Hefferman, Helen, and others, "The Organization of the Elementary School and the Development of a Healthy Personality," California Journal of Elementary Education, 20:129-53, February, 1952.

Purpose:

Basing judgment on research and experience the authors presented school practices as indicated by questions ". . . 2. Does (departmentalization) offer opportunities for pupils to develop healthy personalities? 3...4..."

Summary of author's comments:

1. Departmentalization has the following disadvantages:
   A. It organizes learning in terms of subject matter
   B. It fails to integrate learning experiences
   C. It separates "tool subjects" from areas where tools are used.
   D. It is not psychologically sound
   E. It destroys relatedness and continuity of learning experiences.
   F. No teacher, meeting large numbers of students is able to know a child well enough to give guidance.
   G. A number of teachers end up making demands on students.
   H. The rigid schedule required interrupts activities and so prevents goals and interests from being satisfied.
2. Departmentalization may be justified where teachers are not able to teach art, music, and other subjects well.
3. If a class is departmentalized in elementary school, student should have one half day with one teacher.

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Citation:

Cushenberry, Donald C. "The Intergrade Plan of Grouping for Reading Instruction as Made in Public Schools of Joplin, Missouri," Dissertation Abstracts, 25: 1780-81, Sept., 1964.

Purpose:

To make a detailed study of the intergrade plan of grouping.

Sources of evidence cited by the author:

Doctoral dissertation as shown in citation above.

Summary of evidence cited by author:

1. The number of reading levels that might be expected in heterogeneous class was reduced by 1.7 grades in Eastmoreland School (Grade IV) to 5.6 in Washington School (Grade V).
2. All but one of forty-three teachers interviewed had favorable reaction to plan.
3. All sixteen principals believed their patrons and teachers had favorable reaction.
4. Parents thought plan compared well with other plans and saw few limitations.
5. Pupils in Grades IV, V, VI of two schools at present (1963) surpassed pupils in same grades in 1953-54 in reading achievement by 2.40 grade levels in grade IV; 2.23 levels in Grade V; 2.36 levels in Grade VI as measured by achievement tests.

Generalizations proposed by the author:

1. Chief advantage: reduction in member of ability levels at which teacher was concerned.
2. "Joplin Plan" resulted in reading achievement considerably above national grade norms and in excess of mental-age grade expectancy. Present is higher than that prior to plan.
3. Pupils in plan do an appreciable amount of voluntary reading.

* * *

Citation:

Ogle, A. V. "How Tulsa Teaches the Grades." The American School Board Journal, 136:23-25, April, 1958.

Purpose:

To review a successful semi-departmentalized elementary education method. (Ogle was director of elementary education, Tulsa, Okla.)

Summary of author's comments:

1. Grades 1-6 pupils have one half day with one teacher in the "fundamental" subjects: reading, writing, arithmetic, language,

spelling, health, safety and social studies. The other half day consists of subjects: art, music, science-geography, P. E., speech, and library. Each of these is taught by a skilled teacher in a specially equipped room.

2. A well-organized and carefully correlated program with a high degree of communication among all concerned insures success.
3. Testing program shows Tulsa pupils equal to or surpass the national norms.
4. Parents and children strongly favor the plan - even new comers.
5. There is ". . . emotional release for (pupils) in being with several teachers rather than with only one."

* * *

Citation:

Anderson, Richard C. "The Case for Teacher Specialization in the Elementary School," The Elementary School Journal, 62:253-60, February, 1962.

Summary of author's comments:

1. The "key premise" of the departmentalized school is that teachers with a deeper understanding of his subject is most apt to give excellent instruction in that subject.
2. Little or no evidence is available to show that departmentalization has undesirable effects on children's social and emotional adjustment.
3. "Is it fair to impose a single adult personality, a single set of values, a single way of thinking upon the child?"
4. The self-contained advocacy of "integration" of learning remains an "article of faith rather than a utilitarian principle."
5. "...advantages result from departmentalization alone, major improvement depends on teachers who have mastery of a specialty."
6. There are reasons for believing that specialization is a necessary condition, or at least, a facilitating facilitating factor for greater achievement, more profound learning, greater interest in learning, and better social and emotional development for the student.

* * *

Citation:

"Partial Departmentalization Above Grade 3 is the Answer to Better Instruction," The Instructor, 72:10-11, February, 1963.

Summary of author's comments:

YES

1. Now teachers vote 5 to 2 in favor of departmentalization.
2. The trend to departmentalization is now underway in most teacher-training institutions.
3. Elementary majors will be required to specialize with minimum of 36 hours of study in major field.

4. Upper elementary students today are as sharp as the junior high student of 20 years ago.
5. Few teachers have attributes for first-class instruction in all facets of learning.
6. Team teaching and "swapping" helps, "but departmentalization in upper grades is a Space Age Must!"

NO

Partial departmentalization:

1. is fragmentary and disintegrative in approach,
2. limits outcomes in areas other than intellectual growth,
3. lessens functional use of knowledge because more emphasis on learning the subject rather than on individual needs.
4. causes area of guidance to suffer.

* * *

Citation:

Gunn, James L. "How Small Districts Can Use Departmentalization and Ability Grouping?" School Management, 8:51-53, August, 1964.

Purpose:

To explain how this system of departmentalization works so that others may adopt it.

Summary of author's comments:

1. The school day is divided into three 1 1/2 hour periods.
2. Teachers rotate and teach two subjects per period.
3. Each teacher teaches two subjects (grades 4, 5, and 6) math and science, reading and social studies, or English and spelling.
4. All students get a 45-minute period weekly in each area (art, music, and P.E.) taught by a specialist, while the classroom teacher takes a break.
5. Accelerated students, separate group, have increased achievement by .3 year.
6. Average and below average, grouped together, go at a more rapid pace.
7. Teachers are motivated to give more challenging and interesting presentations.
8. "The results . . . have been extremely gratifying."

* * *

Citation:

Cothron, Joe M. "Departmentalization in the Intermediate Grades," Alabama State Teachers Association Journal, 6:23-24, December, 1963.

Purpose:

To explore some aspects of departmentalization - the advantages and disadvantages.

Summary of author's comments:

1. Unfavorable conditions for departmentalization may be (1) very small schools, (2) excessively large classes, and (3) limited space and equipment.
2. Departmentalization can be a "wonderful experience" for the teacher as well as the pupil.
3. Changing of classes may serve as a break or "rest" and replace need for recesses.
4. Departmentalization permits specialization and opportunity for teachers to teach subject for which they are best equipped.
5. Some teachers say departmentalization (1) gives too little time for supervision and guidance, (2) does not permit correlation of subject material, (3) teacher relationships will not permit the program, and (4) it requires too much teacher work.
6. Individual schools should seriously study the matter in light of its own situation and then do that which will give "maximum educational development of the individual child."